

THE LEISURE HOUR.

A FAMILY JOURNAL OF INSTRUCTION AND RECREATION.

"BEHOLD IN THESE WHAT LEISURE HOURS DEMAND,—AMUSEMENT AND TRUE KNOWLEDGE HAND IN HAND."—*Cooper.*



HOLDING ON FOR LIFE.

A LOVER'S RIDE.

AMONG the "pleasures of memory" associated with my early days, few are more grateful than those of our winter evenings at home, when the shutters were closed, and the curtains drawn, and the fire blazed and crackled in the chimney. In those days we had no "Leisure Hour" or "Sunday at Home," nor could we enjoy the many entertainments in print, which are now to be found in almost every household. Yet I sometimes think, without disparagement to these, that our fire-side stories did as much for us, in one direction at

least, as any of these could have done. Whilst fixing the attention, amusing the mind, and awakening the imagination, much was done by those evening stories and conversations to fill the heart with sound principles, to give it a right moral and religious direction, and to mould the character for future life.

Our dear mother was a charming *raconteur*. We thought so then, and were never tired of listening to her. Since those days of my own childhood, I have often seen her with a group of children about her chair, to whom she would relate the most common-place incident in such a way as most effectually to absorb the

attention of the listener. When I have watched the happy faces and bright eyes of these little guests, never for a moment diverted from the speaker, I have scarcely wondered at the happy evenings we once enjoyed.

Many of these stories, not without a little of the romantic, were real events which had happened to members of our own family, and were related as illustrating a kind and overruling Providence.

I remember one interesting adventure of his own which my father narrated. Before he began business for himself, he was engaged as assistant to another. He was looking forward with some solicitude to the time when he should himself be a master, and, after the common custom of young men, he had contrived to "fall in love." In those days business was business; and if the style of doing it was not quite so "fast" as it is now-a-days, it claimed a very close attention. Every one must "buckle to it," must "stick close," and holidays were few and far between. When a holiday did come, it must be made the most of. So then, when his turn came for a holiday, his idea of making the most of it was to rise early, to take such a journey as should bring him to the presence of the future partner of all sorrows and joys. The use of a horse and a certain light conveyance was cheerfully granted by the master, for an excursion with so honourable a purpose. Before day-break in the morning the horse was harnessed to the carriage. Mounting the seat, whip in hand, indulging in some pardonable waking dreams, and possibly building some castles in the air, he was rapidly driving towards the goal of hope and desire. It so fell out that the holiday I am speaking of was in a very rainy season. It had been raining all night, though the fall had abated in the morning. In such seasons the country was very liable to floods, and he was soon informed, by wayfarers whom he met, that "the waters were out."

There is a very old proverb, which has been exalted to infinitely higher application, but which appeals to human experience and affections: "Many waters cannot quench love, neither can the floods drown it." Though "the waters were out," and the fords were declared to be "all but impassable," the benefit of the small doubt implied in the "all but" was given on the side of making the trial to get across. The road to be pursued lay in several places through the bed of a stream, bridges being then but seldom found in those parts. At ordinary times the streams to be crossed were of clear and shallow water, making their faint ripple over beds of sand or clean gravel; but when much rain had fallen, or when heavy snow storms were followed by a rapid thaw, and it was announced that "the waters were out," then these previously babbling brooks would show the width and force of a river, making broad encroachments on the road on either side, and in the middle often becoming deep and dangerous to cross.

I remember seeing some of these places with water spread into a broad lake, covering the fields for miles, proportionately deep in the usual bed of the stream, and in the shallow parts, where there were no hedges on the farms, completely destroying all visible distinction between the ditch-divided fields. I remember, too, that white posts were placed at intervals along the side of the road, for some yards from either margin of the ordinary rivulet. These posts, having a graduated scale of feet and half-feet marked upon them in conspicuous black lines and figures, served the double purpose of showing the depth of the water at each post, and indicating the boundary line beyond which the traveller must not drive if he would keep his wheels in the beaten and safe track. To this day I can recall, as a sort of romantic adventure

of childhood, the passing through a flood of this kind, riding in a high-wheeled vehicle, which nevertheless had its axles drenched during a considerable part of our passage, the driver taking good care to keep up a due relationship to the friendly guide-posts.

On that memorable morning of my father's love-journey, there was some such place which he must needs get through if he would attain the goal for which he had started. When he came to the margin of the stream, and scanned the breadth of water interposed between the part of the road on which he rested, and that part which could be seen beyond, there was a moment's pause. But he knew every foot of the ground, and had passed it before on his master's business, when there was *almost* as much water. Why not now pass it on an errand so specially his own? Besides, was not the lady waiting on the other side? She was not quite within sight, but still near enough to influence by an attraction of considerable force. Perhaps the reader has not known the experience of a steady and honourable love. He has, then, something yet to learn of the romance and joy of life. And when he has learnt it, he will not laugh at the enthusiasm of this travelling lover, who knew but one attachment of this kind, and never broke faith with the lady of his choice. As for the old stagers, who can now serenely contemplate the excitement and the romance of past life, they will scarcely condemn as rash a yielding to the heart's impulse, any more than they can utterly condemn sundry doings of their own early life, which may now seem to have been tainted with rashness, but which appeared to be reasonable enough at the time.

After a momentary pause, the traveller made up his mind; "crack went the whip, round went the wheels," and in obedience to the cheery and well-known voice of the driver, the willing horse set his hoofs in the stream. On he went till the waters reached the girth—outwards, till they came above the axles of the wheels. To retreat became quickly impossible. A vast and increasing rush of muddy waves, "a fresh," the water-flow of many laids, was gathering as a kind of "rapids" in the centre of the channel. The horse was lifted from his feet. In a few moments his head was turned in the direction of the current, and, with the conveyance, was floating rapidly downwards, bearing the helpless rider on a strange aquatic expedition, whither away it was hard to see or say—probably towards some place called "the wash," not hopeful for a landing-place. Onward, and onward still, through strange whirling eddies, sometimes "the cart before the horse," sometimes the horse before the cart, was this awkward adventure pursued, the conveyance happily never being overset, and the rider never losing his balance. Occasionally this unwanted river navigation was accompanied, perhaps a little encumbered, by the floating carcass of a sheep, the rails of some rick-yard, or a strew of straw and hay, the wrecks of farmsteads, akin to those borne down by "the Bailiff of Bed-ford."

For a long time, far as the eye could reach, across this often-flooded land, the voyager could see no sign of house, or help, or helper. It was no use to shout. There seemed nothing for it but silently and hopelessly to float away, apparently to certain destruction.

There was yet one hope. That solitary voyager had early become a Christian. He was a praying man. He believed in Him who said, "Ye are of more value than many sparrows." Be assured that he would not start on a long journey without commanding all to God. The Father of all mercies kept his mind in peace, and his calm self-possession greatly helped him in this time

of need ; though he was in such peril deliverance was at hand. After awhile he saw willows ahead. By some slightly rising ground on which the said willows were growing, the main stream was somewhat narrowly confined between two banks, whilst much of the superfluous water had cut for itself sundry new channels, or spread itself far abroad on some lower lands. The central force of the stream bore the adventurer into the main channel, between the banks, and beneath the willow trees. As he neared the willows he saw hope of help in their tough branches. Mindful of his master's property as well as of himself, he took the stout reins, which he had never relinquished, and, wrapping them round his arm with a loop, he stood up, and made a desperate grasp at a strong little willow which overhung the bank. As he rose, he caught a glimpse of some men at work in a distant field. He held on with firm and unflinching grip to the friendly branch, twisting the smaller twigs about his hand ; whilst with his legs, hooking them under the seat which had borne him so long, he brought up the floating horse and gear, and began to shout for very life to the labourers seen afar. Happily they heard, and quickly came to help. By great exertions they contrived to relieve the horse, and to bring him on shore, and at last to land the conveyance which so unexpectedly served that day on the river as well as on the road.

Horse and driver were taken to the nearest farm, where they found rest and hospitality to refresh and cheer, having received, beyond a wetting, marvellously little damage. The labourers, though they would have cheerfully rendered an unpaid service, were satisfied and delighted with a generous reward for their timely aid, not the less freely given because the giver was full of gratitude to his heavenly Deliverer ; and, perhaps, also (as a subordinate reason) because he got out on the *right* side, *i. e.*, the side on which the dwelling of the "cynosure" was to be found.

Late, but blameless on that account, and full of gratitude for his deliverance, he reached the goal of this combined voyage and journey ; and the evening was spent none the less happily that there was such an adventure to relate.

How joyfully did these future partners acknowledge the hand of the Divine Disposer, their everlasting Friend ; and in future years what pleasant recollections as well as useful lessons did this adventure afford to loving, listening children in the long winter evenings, when, gathering about the cheerful blazing fire, they would winnily say, and not say in vain, "Oh, do let us hear that story of how father was saved from drowning, when he was going to see mother, before you were married."

Parents can hardly calculate the influence of these fire-side stories. They are a most valuable part of education, fraught with precious results, not for time only, but frequently also for eternity. They are a hidden leaven having untold effect in all after life.

A wise choice of a companion for life may contribute, we know not how largely, to that happy influence which can thus pervade the life of the household, and insensibly work in the minds of children so as ever after to leave a sweet savour of wisdom and love. When courtship is begun "in the fear of the Lord," when all things are "sanctified by the word of God and by prayer," when God is acknowledged in all things and ways, marriage may indeed be full of grace, and families being enriched with Divine blessing will cause to be heard "the voice of rejoicing and salvation in the tabernacles of the righteous."

THE PILLAR OF ENNERDALE.

" You see yon precipice : it wears the shape
Of a huge building made of many crags ;
And in the midst is one particular rock,
That rises like a column from the vale,
Whence by our shepherds it is called 'The Pillar.' "

WORDSWORTH.

THOSE who have made themselves acquainted with that lovely little cluster of mountain scenery, known as the English Lake District, will most likely have some recollection of a tall and rugged "fell," which frowned above them on the left hand, as they toiled along the steep and rocky pass leading from Wastdale to Buttermere. Or perhaps they will better remember it as forming with its towering summit a magnificent background to the view from the foot of the lone lake of Ennerdale, or as seen from Scawfell, Helvellyn, or almost any other high mountain-top, always proudly rearing its bare and massive head above its neighbours, and always presenting the same aspect of stern and lovely grandeur. Its appearance is perhaps more wild and striking than that of any other mountain in the district. The front which it turns towards the narrow and desolate vale of Ennerdale is entirely formed of huge rocks and crags, piled one upon another in wild confusion. But amid this assemblage of grey and time-worn crags, "one particular rock" stands forth pre-eminent, and, by its striking appearance, gives to the whole mountain mass on which it is situated the distinctive name of "The Pillar."

Concerning this rock, if you ask the dalesmen or shepherds of the vales below, they will tell you that the summit is all but inaccessible. They allow that on one or two occasions a sturdy mountaineer has succeeded in clambering to the top ; and they will tell you a tale of one who in bygone days climbed the "Pillar Stone," as it is called, in order to plunder the nest of the eagles which had taken refuge there, but who, when he had once reached the top, was unable to come down, and was obliged to remain there till ropes and other assistance could be procured from below.

The "Stone" is situated amid a perfect chaos of crags, not far from the summit of the mountain, which rises, according to the Ordnance Survey, to the height of 2893 feet above the sea. On account of its loneliness and difficulty of access, this mountain is but rarely ascended by tourists, though there is perhaps none that more richly repays the toil of the very stiff climb which brings one to the summit.

It was bearing towards noon on a fine bright morning, during a Christmas vacation, when I arrived within the wild and barren vale, which even at this hour was enveloped in shadow by the pillar and its neighbours. My ambition was nothing less than to attempt the ascent of the much-talked-of crag ; and with this view I prepared to climb the rugged front of the mountain on which it stood. The prospect above was well calculated to fill even the most unimpressionable with enthusiasm, and a desire to penetrate into the utmost recesses of this grand habitation of nature. Aloft, as far as the eye could reach, there was crag piled on crag, in endless variety of form and position ; all, by exposure to the ceaseless influence of time and the elements, furrowed and worn, and toned down to a sombre grey hue, except where here and there, blackened by streaks of mountain moss which harboured in the crevices. The upper part of the fell was shrouded with a pure and dazzling mantle of untrdden snow, which cast the stern darkness of the lower portion into yet stronger relief, clothing each rocky pinnacle and jutting crag with a kind of half drapery, through which the bare projecting peaks and

edges looked all the more sharp and rugged from the contrast.

The first part of the ascent was tolerably free from crags and precipices, consisting of what the country people call "scree," that is, a thick covering of small stones, which have in the course of ages been worn from the rocks above, and have collected on the lower portion of the fell. These give way beneath the feet, sliding downwards on the slightest impetus, and setting in motion those below them, until the whole hill-side seems to be disturbed. Over ground of this kind progression is of course both slow and laborious; but the pure air of the mountains braced every joint with elasticity, and rendered the very sensation of existence a pleasure. However, I began to feel a little tired when, arriving at the end of this portion of the ascent, I sat down beneath a tall rock, and discussed some hard-boiled eggs and genuine Cumberland oat-cakes, which my knapsack provided.

It was pleasant to look down on the valley below, with its calm, placid lake and turbulent little river. But it was disheartening to observe what small progress I appeared to have made towards gaining the "Pillar Stone," which, though now invisible from the intervening crags, I yet knew to be far above my head. The work, too, before me was of a more severe kind than what I had met with below. These thoughts, added to the somewhat unpleasant fact that the sun was getting to the wrong side of the meridian, decided me that no time was to be lost if I wished to ascend the fell and return by daylight. So to the work I speedily addressed myself, taking at first as my path the bed of a mountain torrent, which formed a gap between two frowning crags. This brought me out into a comparatively open space, whereon lay a few scattered patches of snow—a sort of advanced guard of the huge white envelope which covered the upper part of the mountain. This passed, the true difficulties of the day's work began. Huge precipitous crags presented themselves full in front, which must either be scaled or avoided by a circuitous route. I threaded my way sometimes through watercourses, which in many places seamed and scarred the mountain's face: sometimes climbing from rock to rock; here sinking knee-deep in snow; there ascending on hands and knees a declivity too steep for even the snow to settle on. Still pressing onward, I was making my way along a ledge of rock on the side of a precipice, perhaps twenty feet from the top. On a sudden the ledge, after rapidly narrowing, ceased altogether, leaving me the alternative of returning by the way I came, or attempting to climb the face of the precipice. I chose the latter, as actually the least dangerous of the two. A projecting fragment formed the first step; a tuft of moss gave a foot-hold to the next, and I was rapidly gaining the summit, when a treacherous stone, on which I had unguardedly rested my whole weight, gave way beneath me. Providentially, both my hands were at the time clutching a tuft of heather, and by this for a moment I was supported.

I never shall forget the thrill of horror that ran through me as the dead silence was broken by the sound of the stone dropping from rock to rock till, arriving on the ledge, it made one bound into the ravine below. It was but for an instant. Another foot-hold was speedily gained, and in a short time the top of the precipice. Here I stopped, and, with a feeling of heart-felt gratitude, looked back on the danger from which I had so narrowly escaped. Then onwards, up the steep declivity, and among crags which seemed as if they would shut out all progress. I began to feel

the confidence with which I had set out rapidly oozing away under the influence of the stubborn obstacles which presented themselves on every side. Objects which, from the valley below, are hardly perceptible, often, when actually reached, turn out to be serious impediments. When at the bottom, I had marked out for myself a route which, winding among the rocks and through the ravines, would, I thought, bring me with tolerable ease to the object of my ambition. But this route I soon found it impossible to keep, and was obliged to make my way onwards as I best could, taking each obstacle as it presented itself, and pursuing whatever course seemed most practicable. There was now nothing for it but to go on and climb to the mountain's top. Every mountaineer knows that, in a perilous steep like this, the descent is far more dangerous than the ascent; and, once upon the fell-top, I knew of a comparatively easy route, which led down to the margin of the lake.

As I was toiling onward, a turn brought me within sight of the mountain's summit. I was by no means gratified to observe resting there one of those clouds so frequently seen in these districts, which come on without warning and envelope everything in their moist embrace, shutting from view the whole prospect beyond a range of fifty yards or so. I knew that it would not remain stationary, but would quickly extend itself, descending the mountain's side and spreading over the whole mass. The sight gave me some uneasiness; but I had now gone too far to recede. My best chance for safety was still to go forward and attempt the descent on the side which, with a comparatively gentle and unbroken slope, sinks into the valley below. With as much speed, then, as the nature of the ground would permit, I advanced up the steep hill-side. As I advanced upwards, so downwards, to meet me, came the fleecy moving mass from above. If toil and anxiety had given me space for such thoughts, I should have admired the novel scene. Rolling down upon me was a huge shadowy substance, eclipsing in its onward course rocks, crags, and snow-clad peaks, and, as it were, sweeping them from existence. As it came onward, detached portions separated from the main body, twisting and curling themselves into the most fantastic shapes, fitting like ghosts around rock and pinnacle, and ever changing their form and position. My attention, however, was at this time fully engaged in the endeavour to gain the mountain top as soon as possible. I felt right glad, therefore, when, having reached the top of a rugged eminence, I suddenly perceived the "Pillar-Stone," half hidden by mist, raising its giant form at no great distance above me. A short scramble over the intervening rocks and crags brought me to its foot. I was now completely enveloped in the cloud, and, though on the *lee* side of the mountain, gusts of wind, mingled with sleet and fine rain, occasionally rushed violently through the ravine into which I had arrived. The majestic crag above me, looking like the tower of some grand cathedral of Nature, rose sheer over the place where I stood, its huge bulk cushioned with snow wherever there was place for it to rest—the other portions of a grim grey colour. Here and there a tuft of heather or bracken showed where there was a crevice or projecting fragment which might avail as a foothold. But evening was already approaching, and my ambition had wonderfully cooled down during my climb; so that now my only thought or desire was to reach a place of safety before darkness came on—a thing which I began to fear it would require my utmost efforts to accomplish. The mountain top must first be gained, the ascent to which was craggy and precipitous, and my previous

exertions were beginning to tell on my powers. A dull, harassed feeling was stealing over me, and a kind of vague dread weighed on my spirits. One of the great joys of mountain travelling is the sense of muscular vigour and activity with which the free air inspires us. This fills us with a feeling of self-reliance and confidence that we shall be able successfully to cope with whatever obstacles we may have to meet with; but this feeling I was fast losing. I began to doubt whether my strength would last out through all the exertions which I knew lay before me. Still, with a sort of mechanical perseverance, I toiled onward, the mist growing thicker and more damp and oppressive as I ascended. Snow was beginning to fall in scattered flakes, which tended to increase the dreariness of the scene. A laborious climb at length brought me immediately beneath the extreme summit, which, however, rose precipitously above my head, and seemed to defy every attempt at approaching it. At length, however, I found a deep narrow ravine, which seemed as though cleaved by some giant's sword, and which ran steeply upwards towards the top of the mountain. Up this I scrambled, and at length, nearly spent with toil, the summit of the precipice was gained and I stood on the top of the mountain, nearly 3000 feet above the sea. All around me was a plain some acres in extent and almost a dead level. The last time I had stood there the summer's sun, just rising from behind the distant fells, was gilding the rugged peaks around with his joyous beams, almost drawing a smile even from their rough countenances. Beneath my feet was a carpet of moss, softer and more yielding than any which human hands ever made. Around and below was a prospect which, for grandeur and extent, is not, I believe, surpassed in England. Now how different the scene! Evening was already fast closing in. Above, below, and around me was a dense sleepy mist. All that I could see besides this was the snowy plain on which I stood, and a few of the rocks and crags from which I had just emerged, beneath my feet. Here I was, miles from any house or place of shelter, on the lone mountain top, with many a dark chasm and rugged precipice between me and safety. But the sensation of fear was, for the moment, overpowered by that of physical weariness.

On the higher and more remarkable mountains, the officers of the Ordnance Survey have marked the extreme summit by a pile of stones, surmounted by a pole with cross-trees at the top, like a guide-post. I first turned my steps in search of this, the "cairn," or "man," as the dalesmen call it. It soon appeared, raising its spectral form through the mist. The stones were concealed by a thick covering of snow, and icicles hung from its outstretched arms. Not a very inviting neighbour. Nevertheless, down by its side I threw myself on a bed of snow; and, though a bitter wind was blowing wildly around, for a few minutes I felt neither cold nor dread, all other feelings being swallowed up in the one sweet sensation of rest after toil. It is wonderful how, in this invigorating atmosphere, a few minutes of repose seem to infuse fresh life into one. And so, when daring no longer to indulge in inactivity, I rose to my feet, I was pleased to find myself more refreshed and strengthened than I could have conceived possible. But no time was to be lost. Daylight was already leaving me, and a dangerous journey at best lay before me. I stood for a moment calculating my bearings, and then advanced towards the spot where I felt sure the rocky slope towards Ennerdale commenced. What was my consternation, on arriving at the edge of the mountain's flat summit, to find myself not on the borders of an easy

slope, but on the brink of a precipice. I had miscalculated my position. In anxious haste I ran to another point. Here again I looked over a craggy edge on a sea of mist that tossed and writhed below. Again I sought the cairn, and with a fearful heart tried to collect my thoughts. Eagerly, but in vain, I tried to find some clue, some landmark, which I might recognise, and by its aid discover my position. Nothing could I find. I had now no idea of north, south, or any other point. However, I knew very well that my only hope of escaping a fearful death lay in endeavouring to find my way to the mountain's base; for that, remaining where I was through a bitter winter's night, would be certain destruction. Once more, then, I set off towards the edge of the snowy platform, and was cheered to find the descent tolerably gradual and even. I felt no doubt that I had at length found the Ennerdale side of the mountain, and hoped that by dint of care and the exercise of a tolerable amount of agility, I should reach the bottom in safety.

With a comparatively light heart I hastened down the mountain's side, with as much speed as was consistent with safety. I had not gone far, however, before the wind, which had for some time been high, increased to one of those furious gusts so common in these districts. I have before mentioned, that in ascending the mountain I was on its *lee* side; and supposing the wind to continue in the same quarter, the slope on which I supposed myself to be standing would also be on the sheltered side. As it was, the wind was now coming directly towards me. This fact had not before struck me; but now the thought came on with a thrill of fear, that I was on the wrong side of the mountain. My heart sank within me; for well I knew that if this conjecture were true, I was descending into the wild and barren valley of Mosedale, where is neither house nor shed, and where travellers have so often lost their way, even under the most favourable circumstances.

For the moment a feeling of utter despair came over me. The stories I had heard of wanderers who had perished on the bleak fells rushed into my mind, as the conviction forced itself upon me that I was to add another to those tales of woe. The next thought was, what was to be done? Could I only be sure that I was on the wrong side of the mountain, I would at once reascend it, and endeavour to find my way to the right one. But it was possible that the wind might have changed, and I might yet be in the right direction. I determined at length to go onward, but with a heavy heart, having the fearful doubt resting on my mind that every step might be carrying me farther from the hope of safety. A few minutes, and again I heard the rushing blast roaring among the adjacent crags, as it swept onwards with redoubled force. I instinctively seized hold of a fragment of rock, and bent my head as the gust scoured past. The snow around was whirled into the air, and dashed into my eyes with blinding force. But I held fast to the rock, and in a moment the gust was passed, and I raised my head. I have always considered that blast to have been the means of saving my life. For no sooner had I looked up, than I perceived that the mass of mist which overhung everything above and below, had been, by its violence, separated and torn apart; so that, through a gap in the cloudy screen, I gained a momentary view of the valley beneath my feet. It was but for an instant, and the opening was again closed up; but it was enough to unfold a few prominent objects to my view through the dim light. The stream far below, the outline of a huge fell beyond, a moment's glance enabled me to recognise. My fears were but too

true. I was descending into the uninhabited vale of Mosedale. The certainty, however, of my danger seemed far less fearful than the former state of suspense. I began to revive, now that I knew where I was, and what must be done, and felt determined not to give in till the last moment. A short scramble brought me again beside the "cairn" or summit pile.

I dared not again strike out into the midst of the plain, in search of the slope towards the lake, for fear of once more losing my way. I therefore chose another route, longer, but less likely to be lost. This was to descend from the mountain's summit on the side where it met a ridge running towards Borrowdale, and to walk along that ridge, until I found some means of getting down into the valley below, still the vale of Ennerdale. Once there, I had no doubt of being able to find my way to inhabited regions, even through the darkness. Before I left the summit, daylight had already disappeared; but the mist had greatly diminished, and the reflection from the snow made it light enough for me to see where I trod. Had it not been for this, I could never have reached the valley. Deep holes and crevices, precipitous edges, broken fragments of rock, were all shown in strong relief against the white mantle which surrounded them. I thus was able to see what to avoid, and what to choose as my path. I kept as near as possible to the edge of the ridge, straining my eyes to find some break in its craggy brink, through which I might make my way to the vale below. At length I arrived at the head of a "ghyll," or ravine, which ran down towards the valley, forming an opening by which, as by a steep and stony road, I might descend. From above it looked a black and awful chasm; but I at once struck into it, and in no long time, after a few rather awkward stumbles, and one or two escapes from worse mishaps, reached the valley in safety. Arrived here, I directed my course to the lake, and it was with a feeling of unspeakable joy that I at length saw a distant glimmer of light, which I knew must have its source in the window of the "Angler's Inn." Half an hour afterwards I was seated by its warm fireside, in the enjoyment of the rest and refreshment I so much needed, and feeling, I trust, truly thankful for the merciful care which had preserved me in safety through so many perils.

In conclusion, it may be advisable to add that I by no means intend to justify my conduct in running thus unnecessarily into the hazards I have been describing. The spirit which leads us to place ourselves, without sufficient cause, in a position of peril to life or limb forms no part of true courage, and is, indeed, seldom found in the really brave man. The above adventure, then, must, I think, be considered as having been caused by culpable inconsideration and rashness. I hope, nevertheless, that, as it has been to myself a lesson which I shall never forget, it may also be of some advantage to the readers of these pages, as an example of the dangers to which restless imprudence and want of due caution and foresight may expose the pedestrian, among the more lonely and desolate portions of even our own favoured isle.

THE CHRISTMAS FACE OF LONDON.

CHAPTER I.

Of all the coming events which mark the succession of the London season, there is none which is so generally and so agreeably foreshadowed as the advent of merry Christmas. To the common observer the earliest indi-

cations of this festive era are visible in the shop-windows; and he may remark that it is not the highest order of tradesmen who take the lead in the universal display made on all sides; but a rather humble class, who take time by the forelock, and hasten to produce a sensation if they can, before they are eclipsed, as they know they will be, by the men of capital. The first insinuating feelers are put forth in second-rate thoroughfares, in crowded courts and back streets, and rather more obtrusively in the windows of public-houses. They are the written or printed announcements referring to clubs of various kinds, but all tending to a convivial consummation. The poultier has his goose-club; the publican, on the plea that the Latin for goose is *brandy*, has his goose-and-brandy club; the poor man's butcher has his roast-beef club; and the popular grocer has his plum-pudding club. All these clubs are on the simplest plan: you pay sixpence or a shilling a week for thirteen weeks before Christmas, and when Christmas comes you get your poultry or plums, your beef or your pudding, at a good bargain, and have the materials of a feast without feeling that it has cost you much. That, at least, is the popular appreciation of clubs of this kind; and on the whole they are good, so far as having a tendency to teach people forethought, and to impress them, in a pleasant way, with the advantages of a little self-denial. Now, though these clubs all begin about Michaelmas day, they are mostly behind the scenes for the first month or so: people intending to be members being in no hurry to deposit their subscriptions; but about the half-quarter, these reminders appearing in the shop windows, bring the matter home to them, and they hasten to enroll themselves and pay up the arrears. It is never too late to join these clubs, and in practice, multitudes of working men do join them even in the last month.

It is not until December is in his teens that those who cater for the material enjoyments of Christmas time begin seriously to set about their seductive demonstrations. The grocer, for the reason that he deals in provisions which will suffer least by keeping, invariably leads off the game. His preparations are all on the grand scale; the raisins, the currants, the sultanas, the muscatels, are heaped in mountainous slopes, as though they had come down by a landslip, and are scattered over with spices, as though it had hailed nutmegs and snowed cinnamon and mace. His conserves and sugared sweets flank the fruit in delicate envelopes; boulders of delicious candy, bursting from the frosted sugar, have drifted on to the black mass of currants; jars and vases of jams and jellies, marshalled in ranks, take up commanding positions, keeping ward over files of luxurious sweets, and bonbons charged with the flavour of the pine, the peach, the apricot, and of every exquisite fruit that grows. Solid walls are built up of sardines, and potted meats, and drummed figs, and bottled pickles, and preserved ginger, "hot i' the mouth." There are dense strata of fancy biscuits, cases of dates and French plums, shelves of British wines, from cowslip to the ruddy elder, and, thanks to the new tariff, bottles of French claret and champagne; while the congoi and the hyson, the bohea and the gunpowder teas, with the clayed, muscovado, and refined sugars, form a general back-ground. Arching over all is an artificial bower of glazed canvas leafage, from which hang thumping clusters of red, black, and white grapes, from Hamburg and the Rhine, and the shores of the Mediterranean. Thus the institutional pudding, with all its appetizing accessories, is cared for by the grocer, and all you have to do is to walk into the shop and give your orders liberally.

As to that other institution, the roast-beef, if it is not so forward with its demonstrations, as indeed it never can be, it is equally well looked after. Christmas beef, at least that which is so *par excellence*, it must be remembered, comes from the dismemberment of the prize cattle and exhibition cattle, which are all alive at the Agricultural Hall long after the grocer has received his consignments and displayed them to the public. The butcher's display must necessarily begin much later, and will depend much on the state of the weather; warm damp days tending to spoil the meat, which can be kept an indefinite time if the air is clear and frosty. Sometimes the butcher will exhibit his beef while it is yet alive, tethering the huge oxen to the kerb in front of his door, and decking them with flowers and ribbons like a heathen sacrifice: at others he will have them stalled for a few days in the rear of his dwelling, and admit his customers to a private view, allowing them to choose their joints before they are killed. However this may be, he will kill as soon as he dares before Christmas day, and make as striking a show as he can. And indeed there are few more startling spectacles among London shops, than the shop of the butcher during the Christmas week. The ponderous carcasses of oxen, the scientifically fatted calves, the huge broad-backed sheep—all appear like creatures of other races than we know them to be; their natural outlines are destroyed by their overgrown bulk, and at first sight one hardly knows what to make of them. They are spotlessly clean, and the masses of fat bear sprigs of holly and evergreen, while green boughs depend from the ceiling and overshadow the entrance. At night the whole is powerfully lighted up with gas; and it is now that the admiring crowds gather round to speculate upon their "breed and feed," and rejoice the heart of the enterprising tradesman with unsolicited applause. The quartering and cutting-up comes later, being deferred as long as it can be; and the several joints when severed are ticketed with the names and addresses of the purchasers, in pretty large characters, that the whole neighbourhood may see what a highly respectable connection Mr. Carnifex has the honour to serve. Unfortunately for the butcher, the honour and reputation derived from his sales at this season, are not unfrequently the only profit he makes upon his outlay: exhibition cattle have, unluckily for him, the habit of selling for much more alive than they will fetch when dead; alive they are prodigies of breeding and feeding—a credit to the country, and reflecting credit upon everybody who has to do with them; but when killed, an alarming proportion of their bulk is but material for the tallow-chandler; and hence the loss to the butcher, who has to buy at the higher estimate.

The consumption of poultry in London always reaches its climax at Christmas time; and if one can judge by appearances, there must be ten times as much devoured in the Christmas week as in any other week of the year, with the exception of Michaelmas week, so fatal to the geese. As the festive time draws near, the shop of the poultreyer—and not only his shop but his entire house-front—undergoes a striking transformation; by degrees it envelopes itself in plumage up to the fourth story, if it happen to be so high, as though it were preparing to fly away. The geese, turkeys, and barn-door fowls may be reckoned the staple of his store; but besides these, there is every species of British game, from grouse to larks, with no small collection of foreign birds from France, Belgium and Holland. More than this—the poultreyer, in the pride of his profession, will exhibit anything rare or curious that has wings to fly, independent

of its adaptation to English appetites; a plump seagull, a sprawling stork, a brilliant peacock, a heron, a bittern, a bustard, a huge jack raven—any or all of them he will hang out to view, and would only be too glad of an adjutant, or an ostrich, or a pelican, if he could get one. Some years back, a fortunate tradesman actually displayed an albatross, or rather the skin and plumage of one, measuring over ten feet between the tips of the extended wings. Such displays gratify the tradesman, who thus hints to the public that the whole domain of earth and air is his warren, and feels his own dignity dilate as that impression gets abroad.

The poultry supply is a very complex and rather puzzling subject. Of the turkeys, an immense number come from Norfolk, which county has a high reputation for breeding them; but other counties send their quota. As a rule, they come ready plucked; and they may be compared to diamonds in one respect, inasmuch as their value increases in a geometrical ratio with their weight—a bird of nine pounds being purchaseable at about seven shillings, while three guineas will be asked for one of twenty-five pounds. The monster specimens are exhibited with much pride, and hang as it were in a kind of honourable state for many days, while their repute gets abroad and people make expeditions to see them. The goose, being a more savoury relish, is much more popular than the turkey, as is evidenced by the enormous numbers of them which find their way to London at this crisis. They are borne by steam and rail from France and Ireland; they come by truck-loads from near and distant counties; one sees them unpacking from boxes and hampers, ready plucked; while at the same time and place they are pitching by hundreds, with their feathers on, out of waggons and carts, into underground cellars, where fifty women and girls are plucking away at them day and night; they hang, heads downwards, in dense battalions, on bulks and window-boards, not only in poultreyers' shops, but at grocers', at milk-shops, and dairies, at the pork-butcher's, at the green-grocer's, at the fishmonger's, and even occasionally at the publican's. In no inconsiderable proportion they flank the thronged thoroughfares, go where you will, so that you cannot get rid of the idea of goose and anticipatory stuffing. In the eastern approaches to London, we have before now met large flocks of them waddling in their own funeral procession, under the charge of the goose-herd—forlorn hopes, we may call them, coming up to meet the sage and onions which are to consummate their career. A wretched figure they cut, their sleek plumage matted and clotted with mire, and their hungry throats agape, after a march without rations from the neighbourhood of Epping Forest. If, however, they are not in the best condition on arrival, they can be fattened before killing; and as they are killed only when wanted, they thus subserve the exigency of the market. In the bye-ways of Whitechapel we have occasionally seen groups of them in charge of a countryman, who drove a brisk trade by selling them to the lieges by a species of Dutch auction.

While strolling the streets about this time, one is apt to be deliciously arrested by the exquisite odour of sweets, provokingly stimulating the salivary glands: it may be the mingled aroma of raspberry jelly and caviare, with the ghost of a flavour of mince-meat; by which we understand that we are under the influence of the confectioner. A busy man is the confectioner at this holiday period; for he has not only to provide for impending Christmas, but to meet the demands of Master Tom and Harry, and Miss Bell and Kate, who are home for their holidays, and have no intention of waiting for



THE BUTCHER'S SHOW.

Christmas day before going in for the pies and tarts. There are numerous orders to be executed, in pastry for bachelors' banquets, in cakes, tartlets, and blanc-manges for bewildered housekeepers, who have more than they can do, and in preparing solid dinners for clubs and cliques, and social dining parties, who, taking their Christmas feast together, have no one else to prepare it for them. Then there will be a cart-load or two of bonbons and minute paper-clad mysteries, wanted to stick on the Christmas trees, all of which will be expected to bear honied fruit, whatever else they may carry. It is true the confectioner does not make the mass of these, but gets them sent in from the wholesale manufacturer, along with the comfits and jujubes, and candies and sweeties, and fruity conserves, all which are made by machinery, and by the ton.

An ally of the confectioner—though in a humble way—is the ice-raker, who may make his appearance about this time in the streets, or who may not, as the weather shall determine. In the case of a sharp frost or two coming before Christmas, he is sure to be seen. He knows that the first ice of the season is always readily bought up, since it may happen that it shall prove the only ice that is to be got, save from the importers. Consequently, when he gets up in the morning after a night of frost, instead of driving his cart to Covent Garden for vegetables, or to Billingsgate for fish, he runs off with it to the ponds and pools in the outlying suburbs, which his experience has taught him are the soonest frozen. Armed with a long rake, he skins the surface of the pool of its crystal coating, even though it be not half an inch thick, and conveys it to the confectioner's ice-cellars. So long as the frost continues, the raker will make a prey of the ice, and turn it to his profit. The

business seems one of great hardship, and doubtless is so; but to a certain class it has a double fascination—not only is it more profitable than casual costermongering, but it incurs no risk of capital, and can entail no loss—an important consideration to a poor man. This industry always continues as long as the frost endures, as it would take a very long time to glut the London ice-market. As for the rakers and the rakeresses (for the women co-operate eagerly in this sloppy work), their appetite seems to grow with what it feeds on; they are more numerous and more active as the frost intensifies, and would skin the Serpentine or the Grand Junction itself if they were allowed to do so.

Some one has remarked that London never looks so cheerful, so prosperous, and so satisfied as in the clear dry days before Christmas. This is perfectly true when the days are dry and clear, and there are few pleasanter ways of passing an hour than by walking abroad at such seasons to see what is to be seen. Shops of every description are now in their best trim, and are making their gaudiest show, while the streets are crowded with holiday people. The children are home for the vacation, and have lugged papa and mamma out with them for a shopping expedition. One recognises the girls by the rosy cheeks they have brought from the country, and the boys by their loud playground voices, and rollicking disregard of promenading etiquette. These young people make holiday with characteristic vigour and independence; they perform astonishing feats at the confectioner's; regiments of them storm the toy-shops in the Arcade. They are clamorous for the appearance of the ghost at the Polytechnic, hailing his apparition with a shuddering delight, which dissolves by degrees into saucy familiarity; and are in ecstacies at the marvel-



THE GROCER'S SHOP.

lous juvenile memoirs of Herr Whistler, and his imitations—not a whit less marvellous—of the singing-birds. They besiege the Cosmorama; they take the Zoological Gardens by storm; and they get lost and found a dozen times in the interminable galleries of the Museum. They clamber to the top of St. Paul's; they dive to the bottom of the Thames Tunnel; they "do" the Tower, and the Monument. One meets them at the nurseryman's choosing their Christmas trees; one jostles them in the crowd, staring at the prize capon or fat rabbit suspended as a spectacle in the dairyman's window;

and one meets them again at the photographer's, getting themselves done in groups, where some of them are apt to appear without their heads, because they are too excited to keep them still. At the fruiterer's—whose shop at this season is the "mellow shrine of Pomona" herself—you catch them cracking walnuts, or sucking oranges, or doing both at once, while their bright eyes are glancing round to see what shall come next; and, find them where you will, in whatever varied or motley scene, they are shedding the sunshine of our long-vanished days around them, and



ICE-SPECULATORS.

reviving the cherished associations of our childhood. Going into the bookseller's shop, one is sure to meet them there, and puzzled enough they are sometimes, in that storehouse of riches, by the difficulties of the choice which papa has allowed them to make; and not a few of them, we are naturally gratified to remark, are of opinion that the bonniest bargain they can buy is the annual volume of "The Leisure Hour," with its coloured cartoons, its hundred and fifty choice wood engravings, and containing pleasant reading enough, as the schoolboys word it, "for a whole half," and profitable reading too.

Another addition to the ordinary London crowds which one sees in the streets at Christmas time, are the children of a larger growth—the groups, often whole families, of country people, who arrive here in time to spend the Christmas holiday with their city relatives. Their visits have been long in prospect, and they are sure to arrive furnished with a rather long programme of the exploits they intend to perform. Country-people now-a-days don't come up to town, as their forefathers did, merely to get dazed with the din and mystery of the great Babylon, and go back again no wiser than they came. Farmer Glebe and his wife and daughters now know what's what; the cheap journals and the pictured newspapers have banished the old ignorance and wonderment: now, if the farmer brings his family to town, he takes care that they see its lions, and reap a little knowledge as well as pleasurable excitement from the trip. And our country cousins are not only sight-seers—they are moreover persistent shoppers, and one might wonder how they can afford to spend so much cash, were we not aware that they buy on these occasions for friends at home, and spend other money than their own. They are always exceedingly welcome to the shopkeepers, who, knowing that they will not ask for credit, spare neither pains nor politeness in helping them to settle their choice. The omnibus is the country people's coach and pair, and they are ever ready to patronize it; and you may observe that one of them seldom gets in without attempting to get up a hearty conversation with his neighbours—in which attempt we need hardly say he does not succeed. On the whole, however, the provincial of the present day takes much better care of himself than his forefather could do; and though he is given to lose himself by confounding the points of the compass, and going north when his way lies south, and so on, yet, thanks to the ever-present police, he is sure to be put right again. The police also befriend him in another way, by keeping at this season a sharp look-out after the light-fingered gentry, who are too apt to make free with the countryman's pockets. The visitors whom Christmas-tide bring to London from the provinces, are said to be at the present time fifty times as many, relatively to the population, as they were fifty years ago.

DR. GRAVES OF DUBLIN.

WE have received a volume, published in the present year, entitled "Studies in Physiology and Medicine, by the late Robert James Graves, F.R.S., Professor of the Institutes of Medicine in the School of Physic in Ireland. (Churchill & Co.)" They are edited by William Stokes, Regius Professor of Physic in the University of Dublin, and are of very great merit; but as general readers will not care much about the symptoms and treatment of fever, or the causes of animal heat, we shall insert a few particulars personal to Dr. Graves,

which may be interesting and useful to readers of every description.

He was the son of Dr. Richard Graves, the author of "Lectures on the Pentateuch," who had three sons, Richard, Hercules, and Robert, all of whom passed through the University with much distinction.

The degree of Bachelor of Medicine in the University of Dublin was conferred on Robert Graves in 1818. He soon after proceeded to London, where he studied for some time. The schools of Berlin, Göttingen, Vienna, and Copenhagen, and those of France and Italy, were subsequently visited. Three years were thus employed, and then, after having resided for some months in Edinburgh, he returned to Dublin.

During his sojourn in Italy, he became acquainted with Turner, the celebrated landscape painter, and was his companion in many journeys. He often spoke of the pleasure he enjoyed, during the sketching tours taken in company with the great painter. Graves was travelling by diligence, when, in one of the post stations on the northern side of the Alps, a person took a seat beside him, whose appearance was that of the mate of a trading vessel. At first, no conversation took place between them; but Graves' curiosity was soon awakened by seeing his fellow-traveller take from his pocket a note-book, across the pages of which his hand, from time to time, passed with the rapidity of lightning. Overcome at length by curiosity, and under the impression that his companion was perhaps insane, Graves watched him more attentively, and discovered that this untiring hand had been faithfully noting down the forms of the clouds which crossed the sky as they drove along, and concluded that the stranger was no common man. Shortly afterwards, the travellers entered into conversation, and the acquaintance thus formed soon became more intimate. They journeyed together, remaining for some time in Florence, and then proceeding to Rome. Graves was himself possessed of no mean artistic powers, and his sketches from nature are full of vigour and truth. He was one of the few men in whose company Turner is known to have worked. Graves used to describe how, having fixed on a point of view, he and his companion sat down, side by side, to their work. "I used to work away," he said, "for an hour or more, and put down as well as I could every object in the scene before me, copying form and colour, perhaps as faithfully as was possible in the time. When our work was done, and we compared drawings, the difference was strange; I assure you there was not a single stroke in Turner's drawing that I could see like nature; not a line nor an object, and yet my work was worthless in comparison with his. The whole glory of the scene was there." The tone and fire with which Graves uttered these last few words, spoke volumes for his sympathy with, and his admiration of the great painter of nature.

At times, however, when they had fixed upon a point of view, to which they returned day after day, Turner would often content himself on the first day with making one careful outline of the scene. And then, while Graves worked on, Turner would remain apparently doing nothing, till at some particular moment, perhaps on the third day, he would exclaim, "There it is!" and seizing his colours, work rapidly till he had noted down the peculiar effect he wished to fix in his memory. It is a curious fact, that these two remarkable men lived and travelled together for months, without either of them inquiring the name of his comrade; and it was not till they reached Rome, that Graves learned that his companion was the great artist.

After leaving Rome he visited Sicily, and in connection with this excursion, the following incident is worthy of being recorded, as giving an insight into his character, and as preparing us to estimate one of its features, for which in after-life he was justly distinguished, namely, his promptness and vigour of action, when confronted with difficulty and danger.

He had embarked at Genoa, in a brig bound for Sicily. The captain and crew were Sicilians, and there were no passengers on board but himself and a poor Spaniard, who became his companion and messmate. Soon after quitting the land, they encountered a terrific gale from the north-east, with which the ill-found, ill-manned, and badly commanded vessel, soon showed herself unable to contend. The sails were blown away or torn, the vessel was leaking, the pumps choked, and the crew in despair gave up the attempt to work the ship. At this juncture Graves was lying on a couch in the cabin, suffering under a painful malady, when his fellow-passenger entered, and in terror, announced to him that the crew were about to forsake the vessel; that they were then in the very act of getting out the boat, and that he had heard them say that the two passengers were to be left to their fate. Springing from his couch, Graves flung on his cloak, and, looking through the cabin, found a heavy axe lying on the floor. This he seized, and concealing it under his cloak, he gained the deck, and found that the captain and crew had nearly succeeded in getting the boat free from its lashings. He addressed the captain, declaring his opinion that the boat could not live in such a sea, and that the attempt to launch it was madness. He was answered by an execration, and told that it was a matter with which he had nothing to do, for that he and his companion should remain behind. "Then," exclaimed he, "if that be the case, let us all be drowned together. It is a pity to part good company." As he spoke, he struck the sides of the boat with his axe, and destroyed it irreparably. The captain drew his dagger, and would have rushed upon him, but quailed before the cool, erect, and armed man. Graves then virtually took command of the ship. He had the suckers of the pumps withdrawn, and furnished, by cutting from his own boots the leather necessary to repair the valves, the crew returned to their duties, the leak was gained, and the vessel saved.

In 1821 Graves returned to Dublin, and at once took a leading position in the profession and in general society. He was tall in stature, of dark complexion, and with noble and expressive features. In conversation he had the faculty of displaying an accurate and varied knowledge without a shade of egotism; and he could correct error without an approach to offence. He showed sincere and lasting gratitude for the smallest kindness, and was a warm friend of civil and religious liberty.

In 1821, he was elected Physician to the Meath Hospital, and by his lectures, and by co-operation with able professional brethren, he did much to elevate the Irish School of Medicine to its deserved celebrity.

Graves was a Fellow of the King and Queen's College of Physicians, and was subsequently elected King's Professor of the Institutes of Medicine. He was chosen President of the College of Physicians in 1843 and 1844, and was elected a Fellow of the Royal Society in 1849. Besides these distinctions, he received the diploma of Honorary, or of Corresponding Member, from many of the medical societies of Europe.

It was in the autumn of 1852, he being then in his 57th year, that the symptoms of the malady which was

to prove fatal first showed themselves. In the following February he began to succumb to the disease. Although at times his sufferings were great, yet he had many intervals of freedom from pain; and he then showed all his old cheerfulness and energy. To the very last he continued to take pleasure in hearing of any advance of knowledge that tended to ameliorate the condition of man, or to throw light on his relations to a future state. In this latter point of view, the discoveries of Layard greatly interested him, as illustrative of the sacred history; and thus he was permitted to fill up the intervals of his sufferings, even to the last; for his mental faculties never failed or flagged—a mercy for which he often expressed a fervent gratitude; and so he was providentially enabled to review the past, and to form a calm and deliberate judgment on the religious convictions of his earlier years. And when once the truthfulness of these was ascertained, he adhered to them with that earnestness which characterized all his decisions.

It was after the attainment of this state of patient expectation that one who was dear to him expressed a prayerful wish for his recovery.

"Do not ask for that," he replied; "it might prove a fatal trial."

His mind having become thus satisfied, he made few remarks on these subjects, except in reply to the inquiries of others. Thus, when referred to the prophetic illustration of purifying and redeeming love, "A fountain shall be opened for sin and for uncleanness"—

"No," he said, "not a fountain, but an ocean."

On the day before his death he desired (a second time) to partake of the Holy Communion, with his family. When some explanations were commenced, he answered—

"I know all that; I do not regard this as a charm, but I wish to die under the banner of Christ."

Feeling himself sinking, he asked for prayer, and a petition was offered suitable to his condition; but he seemed to long for something more, and when questioned, replied—

"I want some prayers that I know—some of the prayers of my youth—some of my father's prayers."

The Litany was commenced; he immediately took up the well-known words, and when the speaker's voice faltered, he continued them alone and distinctly to the end of the strain, "Whom thou hast redeemed with thy most precious blood."

On the 20th day of March, 1853, and without renewed suffering, he ceased to breathe.

His tomb is in the cemetery of Mount Jerome. It bears the following inscription, dictated by himself:—

ROBERT JAMES GRAVES,
SON OF RICHARD GRAVES, PROFESSOR OF DIVINITY,
WHO,
AFTER A PROTRACTED AND PAINFUL DISEASE,
DIED IN THE LOVE OF GOD, AND
IN THE
FAITH OF JESUS CHRIST.

A JOURNEY FROM RESHT, IN PERSIA, TO ASTRAKHAN.

AFTER quitting Resht, and splashing and stumbling through quagmires at the rate of a mile and a half an hour, we contrived to reach Piri Bazar about midday on the 26th of August, 1861. I may as well inform those who have not undergone my four years' residence in that very unpleasant country, Persia, that, owing to the general misgovernment which prevails, there are no roads whatever, but merely tracks worn by the constant

passage of travellers during a long series of ages. Wheel-carriages are unknown, and all the traffic is carried on by means of baggage animals (mules and pack-horses), who proceed in strings, having generally as a leader a very old and experienced mule, the bell round whose neck guides the rest, and who invariably resents any attempt made by the other animals to get ahead of him, by biting and kicking them.

The central plateau of Persia lies nearly 4000 feet above the level of the Caspian, and is separated from that vast inland sea by the El Boorz mountains, the chief of which is Demavind, north-east of the capital, Tehran, and about 21,000 feet high—at least, that was the altitude assigned to it by the Russian traveller Khanikoff.

In this dry and arid region, the greater portion of the soil of which is impregnated with nitre, the cultivation is only carried on by means of irrigation. The population is sparse, and the traveller may frequently proceed twenty and thirty miles without catching a glimpse of anything green, until he nears some village, which generally offers, in its poplars, and ill-tilled but green fields, an object refreshing to eyes wearied by the continual glare of a burning sun and the dazzling nitrous efflorescence which covers the soil.

There are "chapar khanuhs," or post-houses, on all the main routes throughout the country, which, under a decent government, would be of great value; but here they are rather an impediment than otherwise to quick travelling, because they, too, suffer from the gangrene of corruption, embezzlement, and extortion which perpetually gnaws into the very vitals of Persia.

His Majesty the Shah, although he delights in the title of Centre of the Universe ("Kibleh i Aalem") and Shadow of God ("Sayeh i Khoda"), is the chief and main cause of all the oppression and knavery which prevail; he sells the governments of provinces to the highest bidders, who, when once appointed, receive a mere trifle in the way of salary, and seek to repay themselves for their outlay, and amass money by extorting his last stiver from the unhappy peasant. As their tenure of office is uncertain, they fleece the poor people so unsparingly that they sometimes are goaded into rebellion, when his Majesty turns out the obnoxious governor, who is generally mulcted in a heavy amount, and then sells the government to somebody else.

Of course, under such a system, but little is done for the lines of communication, which, owing to the dryness of the soil, are tolerable in Irak and Azerbaijan, but which are of an infamy beyond description in the mountain districts, and throughout that long strip of jungle and rice-swamp which composes the Caspian provinces (Gilan, Mazanderan, and Asterabad), where it was my lot to vegetate for the space of four years.

Every mule follows his leader, stepping exactly where he has stepped, and this is repeated by each convoy that follows; so that the road soon becomes a series of ridges, the furrows between which are, during ten months of the year (i. e. excepting during the very hottest months) filled with liquid mud and slime. None but the horses who are *habitues* can go any distance without falling prostrate in the mire, which is hindered from drying up by the shade of the vast forests, which make Gilan and Mazanderan very pleasant and attractive to the eye, but which engender malaria and fevers, the disagreeable effects of which are observable in the yellow physiognomies and feeble forms of the Gilaik peasantry.

But as my present object is not to describe Persia and its impurities at length, let us proceed. Piri Bazar is a Gilaik village of a few hundred inhabitants. Situated

on a small stream which falls into the great Moordab, or lagoon of Enzelli, and which is navigable as far as the village, its inhabitants were as usual fever-stricken and miserable. The chief of the village having learnt that I was about to leave Gilan, came to pay his respects to me, and brought me, according to Persian usage, a sheep, with a view of extracting four times the value of the animal from my infidel pocket; and I was really so rejoiced at the prospect of shaking the mud of his unhappy country from my boots for ever, that I did not grudge the extortion.

I bade farewell to all my servants but a certain Ismail, a Toork from Azerbaijan, who was to act as my body attendant as far as Astrakhan, and I proceeded across the shallow Moordab, studded with reedy islands, and abounding with every species of water-fowl, to Enzelli. Here I shook hands with Shahroukh Mirza, the Prince governor, who was an old friend of mine, and to whom I presented my Tranter's five-shooter as a *souvenir*, and was soon gratified by the announcement that the Russian "Gemmi-i-ateshi," or fire-ship, "Prince Bariatinsky," was in sight.

I was not long in reaching her, and, on scaling her sides, was received with that universal kindness and *bonhomie* which I have always found to pervade every class of Russian society to which it has been my good fortune to be admitted, and which were in particular remarkable in the officers of the Caspian fleet, whose acquaintance I had made at the station of Ashourada, near Asterabad, in the south-east corner of the Caspian. I shall not soon forget the portly form of hospitable old Commodore Lichareff, and of his good-natured spouse; and I shall ever retain an affectionate recollection of Hullessem, Korovaioff, Sherebhoff and others, whose kindly faces I first saw after a four months' weary trudge through the rice-swamps and jungles of the Caspian provinces in 1859.

Because the great Napoleon declared that if you removed a Russian skin, you would find a Tartar beneath it, was the fashion to underrate the pure Russian, and to attribute unworthy motives to his every action; and it was not until a very large number of our countrymen made their nearer acquaintance at Sevastopol, that we began to understand them. Then we saw strong stern soldiers and excellent officers, and, what is more, felt them; and we found that even where travel had not lent the same polish as to his richer compatriots, the Muscovite, although rough, and still labouring, it is true, under the failings inseparable from the sudden transition from barbarism which his race has undergone since Czar Peter's time, was capable of rapid improvement, and eager to acquire it. Rome was not built in a day; and the present state of Great Britain has been the work of ages. Let me also say that before we attack Russia on account of her aggrandizing propensities, we should do well to be without reproach on the same score ourselves.

The "Prince Bariatinsky" was one of a fleet of English-built steamers, sent in pieces *via* the canals which connect Petersburg with the Volga, to Astrakhan, where they are put together under the superintendence of English engineers. All the fittings are made in England, and the very oil-cloth on the saloon-tables was British.

The officers were one and all members of the "marine militaire," and our engineer was a thorough and unmistakeable John Bull, named Harms, whose jolly face it did me good to see, after years of yellow Gilani visages. We were mutually delighted at the meeting, and at the opportunity of conversing in our mother tongue. How

Harms ever contrived to get on with the Russian machinists I could never understand; he only possessed a very few words of Rooski, and although he had knocked about all over the world, in the exercise of his profession, and had picked up scraps of French, German, Spanish, and Italian, he was perfectly incapable of speaking any one tongue correctly, and his lingo was the most delightful medley of strange sounds I ever heard. The captain, Nazimow, like most Russian officers, spoke French well, and so did his second; and I found an old friend in the shape of a Lieutenant Fedzow, whom I had formerly known at Ashoorada.

We soon weighed anchor, and I bade a long adieu to Gilan. As the line of trees which fringe the coast of Enzelli, and its batteries, were fading in the distance, I was summoned to dinner by the captain. It is the Muscovite fashion to whet the appetite with caviare, pickled Dutch herrings, etc., accompanied by a glass of "vodki" or Russian corn-brandy, which to my fancy tastes uncommonly like Irish whisky, and is of about the same colour. A Russian would never be able to sit down to his "tshtshee" or cabbage soup, without previously partaking of this stimulant. "Tshtshee," be it known to the uninitiated, is the universal Russian *potage*, and is swallowed with great gusto by all classes; and neither it nor the much maligned "tchorni klep" or black bread, are to be despised; the latter, in particular, is extremely nutritious, and, I think, pleasant to the taste, and is preferred by the Russians themselves to white bread, although the white bread of Moscow is unequalled even by the productions of a Parisian *boulangerie*. I cannot speak equally favourably of "quass," which is a very nauseous bad kind of beer.

We coasted the uplands of Talisch, which are inhabited by a race of mountaineers, far superior as to physical conformation and courage to the effeminate lowlanders of Gilan, and governed by a very bumptious chief named Faraj-oollah Khan, a gentleman who is still somewhat addicted to levying black-mail, and who is anything but an obedient subject of "the Centre of the Universe." On the following morning we anchored off the Russian frontier-station of Astara, where we got rid of several of our Persian deck-passengers, and took in some more. The said passengers were decidedly unpleasant neighbours, their clothes being generally "populous;" and it was anything but refreshing to notice them during the day removing the intruders from their garments, and from their long-peaked black Bokhara lamb-skin caps, which were perfect nests of vermin. It is very remarkable that a race whose religion obliges them to frequent the warm baths, and who pass several hours at a time there, and who look on hair as an excrement, and carefully remove it from their bodies by means of a depilatory called "wajibee," should still be covered with creeping things. The Persians were, by Nazimov's order, prevented from coming on the quarter-deck, and the precaution was a very necessary one for our comfort.

As we steamed away in the direction of Lenkoran, or the Place of Anchorage, the weather gradually became rougher, and the Iranis, who were huddled together in groups, began to show symptoms of sea-sickness; like all Persians, they had no sea-legs, poor fellows, and they were paying the penalty of having indulged in their usual travelling meals of leathery unleavened bread, and geological cheese, with unlimited raw cucumbers and water-melons. I do not exaggerate when I say that I have seen a Persian—his name was Mahomed Beg, and he was a Mission Gholum or courier—sit down and deliberately dispose of nineteen cucumbers and two large water-melons, although the unprincipled glutton

had already gorged himself with mutton and "poolao;" nor did the surfeit seem to affect him particularly, for he slept the sleep of a boa-constrictor for several hours, and was fresh and ready to accompany me when I summoned him to leave Khoi. A life of alternate hardship and repletion must, however, tell on even a Persian's digestion in the end, and derangements of the digestive organs are consequently very prevalent.

The "Prince Bariatinsky" was a splendid vessel, and did credit to her builders; but the officers and crew were far from being model seamen: in fact, it was not to be expected that they should be; and any comparison between them and our own "salts" would be most unfair. The Russian navy is chiefly manned by "mujiks" or peasants, taken, as for the army, by conscription, and their nautical training is in general limited to the circumscribed bounds of the Baltic, Black, and Caspian Seas; the only really good seamen they possess are the Fins, who are naturally a seafaring people and hardy boatmen.

A noble lord once told me that if the Mediterranean had at one time been called "a French lake," the Caspian might well be styled "a Russian pond," for the Russians have taken care to arrogate to themselves the sole power of having war vessels on this great inland sea, and Great Britain cannot now violate treaties which she sleepily allowed to be made in former days, by aiding Persia in the establishment of a navy, which might have served as a barrier to Russian aggression in Central Asia, and interference with our affairs in India.

The whole police of the Caspian is in the hands of the Russians, who, however, do not exercise it with sufficient severity to prevent the raids of the Toorkman pirates and kidnappers, who carry off whole families from the district of Astarabad, in the immediate vicinity of Ashoorada, the Russian naval station.

The Russian Commodore does, it is true, sometimes make an excursion along the coast, and if he can, pounce on some stray Toorkman "obah," or congregation of black felt tents; but the Toorkman birds do not often allow him to lay salt on their tails, and are generally away from the coast and far inland, before he reaches the shore; of course it is impossible to pursue such speedy and slippery gentlemen into the steppes which constitute the whole of that vast extent of territory lying between the Persian province of Khorassan and the Caspian and Aral Seas. The only sure method of recovering a kidnapped friend is to ransom him; and I have often met with poor folk in Persia, begging from town to town for funds to rescue some near relative from Toorkman captivity.

As the Persian is a Sheea, or Mohammedan of the sect of Ali, and the Toorkman a Soonnee, that is, one who recognises the five "khalifehs," or Caliphs, as we call them, and as religious fanaticism adds to the natural antagonism of two different races who have always been on evil terms, it may well be imagined that the borders of the Astarabad province are even more uncomfortable residences than the northern marshes of England were in the days of the moss-troopers; and unluckily this state of things is likely to continue, for the Persian governors swindle their troops, starve them, and sell their ammunition and clothes. Even old Sir John Falstaff would have declined to march through Coventry with such tattered vagabonds as the "toofenkchees" or local militia, who are dragged from their homes without any previous military instruction, and without pay, and who consequently "skedaddle" back to their fields on the first opportunity.

When a Toorkman is taken, he is generally decapitated,

and his head is then salted and sent to his Majesty, and the exploit is duly noticed in that beautiful specimen of journalism the "Tehran Gazette," an official paper which, for its astounding power of lying, is unmatched throughout the world, old or new.

But to return to the Caspian. The waves began to become troublesome before we reached Lenkoran, where there is no port, only a roadstead, and where we landed a Mr. G—, the agent of the Russian Caucasus and Mercury Company for trading with Persia, and who was reputed to make rather more money for himself than he did for the company. This company was originated by a Russo-German, one Baron von Tornau, and a Russian Moscow merchant, who had made heaps of money by farming the manufacture of that "vodki" which is so dear to the Russian peasant; and I am rather inclined to think that these two individuals were backed by the Government, who hoped by their means to increase Russian influence in Persia. As a commercial undertaking it had proved a failure; its capital had been wastefully laid out in buildings and unprofitable speculations; and those who were best acquainted with its affairs predicted that it would be bankrupt in a year or two.

The Russian has no genius for anything but petty commerce; and a vast undertaking like that of the company in question can only result unsatisfactorily, owing to the incompetency or dishonesty of agents, who suffer from that great evil which pervades everything in Russia, *i.e.*, insufficient salaries, which, in addition to the necessity of keeping up appearances to an extent by far exceeding their means, tempt them to resort to unclean modes of gain. One of the magnates of the company, a Pole named K—, had his residence at Lenkoran, where he lived in a princely style, and, I presume, continued to do so until the bubble burst.

Lenkoran is a most uninteresting place, and, like all the sea-coast of the Caspian, a hotbed of intermittent fevers, which demolish Europeans in sadly quick time. They are aided to a considerable extent by a neglect of sanitary precautions, and by a persistence in an indigestible diet, and adherence to spirits, which afflict the Russians to about the same extent as they did our old English factors who first represented the East India Company in Bombay and Madras.

The medical profession, moreover, in Russia, is not what it ought to be; Germans predominate, and the native Russian practitioner is a *rara avis*, owing to the imperfect system of medical education in the Czar's dominions.

Amongst our passengers was a very old friend of mine—a Doctor of Medicine and Philosophy of the University of Leipsic. He had found that his scanty earnings would not suffice for his own subsistence and that of a widowed mother with a large family, and he bravely went to the East, as many other Germans have done. He sought employment in the Turkish army, which had been deleteriously quacked for ages by Italian medicos of doubtful honesty and of Brummagem knowledge, and he was in Asia Minor at the time of the noble defence of Kars by Generals Williams and Kmety. Owing to the unfortunate delay arising from diplomatic jealousies, which prevented the good soldier, Omer Pasha, from landing on the coast of the Caucasus, Kars fell before H— could reach it, and he then determined to seek his fortune in Persia. He left Erzeroum, Armenia, almost alone, and proceeded with the scanty property contained in his 'khoorjeens,' or saddle-bags, through the dreary wastes which predominate in the Asiatic dominions of the Sultan, until he reached Persia.

On the road he was exposed, as every traveller is, to the attacks of the robber Koords, who, however, luckily did not ill-treat and rob him, as they did our present Consul-General at Tabriz, Mr. Edward Keith Abbott, some years ago.

It is the fashion in England to believe that the British name is a tower of strength in distant countries; but Lord Palmerston's "Civis Romanus" has not prevented innumerable instances of unredressed aggression; and to prove this I may mention that my own consular person was twice fired at in Persia, and no reparation asked for or made.

The same thing happened in Peru, where our own minister, Mr. O'Sullivan, was murdered, and where the body of Commander Lambert, of the Royal Navy, was found floating down the river covered with stiletto wounds.

Dr. H— at last arrived in Resht, in Gilan, and took up his abode in that feverish city, where he passed six long years, gaining his livelihood by treating the numerous maladies of the inhabitants; who, however, although very ready to apply to him for remedies, were very backward in paying for them. H— was very careful and saving, and generally dined at the Russian and English Consulates, from both of which he received a regular stipend, paid, in my instance, out of my own pocket, because the home authorities refused to give me any extra allowance for medical purposes. The Russians, on the other hand, did see the necessity of maintaining their officers in health, in order to enable them to do their duty.

H— at last, by hook or by crook, contrived to amass about a couple of hundred pounds, and with that he made up his mind to return home. He had learnt by sad experience what fickle knaves the Persians were, how ready they were to promise, and how tardy to fulfil, and he therefore started with me from Enzelli. Unlike my unmarriageable self, however, he had included a wife amongst his "impedimenta" whilst in Persia, and the bright eyes of a certain Russian damsels had induced him to engage in matrimony during a visit to Lenkoran.

Steady plodding German that he was, he had noted down in hieroglyphics, only to be comprehended by himself, every fact and every peculiar feature of Persia. Not a monument had escaped him, not a town had remained unvisited; and his observations with regard to the manners, customs, and disposition of the natives, and of the climate, diseases, and religion, were complete.

Some day or other, I hope, he will give all his knowledge to the world, and benefit European statesmen by showing how these regions pine under the curse of mis-governance, and the fanaticism of a false religion.

Islam is the creed of compulsion by the sword, and, in that respect, is much akin to the Roman Catholicism of Torquemada and the Inquisition. In distant countries like Bokhara, where it still reigns supreme, and where the bigotry of the "mollahs" is untempered by a wholesome fear of European artillery (as is the case in Persia and Turkey), we all know that Stoddart and Conolly were foully murdered, and that gallant old Dr. Wolff barely escaped with his life from the hands of the treacherous villain Abd-ool Samet Khan, the Prime Minister of the Khan of Bokhara. And the same was the case in former days, both in Turkey and Persia.

Let any one who doubts this go into the Armenian burial-grounds in Constantinople, and seek for the effigies of Christians foully murdered by the Osmanlis, and still visible on their tombstones, each rude attempt at sculpture showing whether the death had taken place

by decapitation or by the eord; or let him read the curious work of Olearius, who travelled in Persia whilst Charles I sat on our throne, and he will learn the true Moslem spirit in the tale of an unfortunate Swiss watchmaker who was judicially murdered in Isfahan by the priests, because he had slain a midnight burglar, that burglar being a Mahometan.

Mohammedanism burst on the world like an electric flash, burning up the worn-out and used-up governments of the seventh century of our era, and at first had it all its own way; but the spasmodic effort once passed, she gradually sank into decrepitude.

Turkey and Egypt being, on account of their proximity, more open to the beneficial influence of Europe, have acquired a thicker varnish of civilization than remoter countries; but even there the cloven foot cannot be hidden. Could we only feel convinced that a great Greek Empire could be established, with Constantinople again Greek, as before its conquest, we might be content to see those semi-barbarians, the Turks, sent back to the wilds of Asia, which vomited them forth in former days as a scourge to the western world, and we should have a strong power commanding the boundaries of Asia and Europe, and hindering Russian aggression. Remember, I am saying nothing against Turkey as a power, or Turks politically; but the Mohammedan religion is opposed to progress.

It may be said that the antecedents of the modern Greeks are not in their favour, and that they have failings of the most serious nature; but it must not be forgotten that, although they had been degraded and crushed during centuries under the weight of a despotic yoke, they still rose up sternly, and defied all the efforts which the combined savagery of the Turks and Egyptians could bring against them during several years, until Europe helped them—very late in the day, it is true—but still, helped them.

The present Cabinet has taken a step in the right direction by ceding the Ionian Islands, and it is to be hoped that the sons of Hellas, throughout both European and Asiatic Turkey, will soon cease to be oppressed by those who are aliens to them both in religion and race, and who have abused God's gifts to an extent which no one who has not read of the glorious prosperity of Asia Minor in days gone by, or wandered amongst the splendid ruins which still remain in Anatolia and Syria as monuments of the past, can well understand.

Recent reforms in Turkey—especially the edicts of toleration—are creditable, although partly exacted by European opinion, and dictated by expediency. But without the bulwark of a great Greek Empire, Russia will, in the end, be mistress at Constantinople. The Armenian population would join the Greeks, not because they love them, but because they are morally an inferior race, aware of their own weakness, and because they detest the Turks, who have always oppressed them.

The immense and fertile tracts, which are now swamps and deserts, would gradually be reclaimed and cultivated, and commerce would bring in funds which would turn the present Tartarus into an Elysium:

Russia would undoubtedly do her best, or rather her worst, to prevent such a consummation; but, in her own disorganized state, her bark would be worse than her bite, more especially if Poland were a free nation and the Caucasus independent.

Russia's weak point is the Caucasus, and if our armies, in lieu of going to the Crimea, had landed there, whilst our navies kept the sea, Schamyl, the world-known, would not now have been a Russian captive at Kalonga, and no single vestige of Russian domination would be visible at

the present moment between the Black and Caspian Seas. *Moreover, Poland might have been freed then.*

But let us leave these digressions, and return to the Caspian.

The Caspian is a very troublesome sea indeed, and numerous are the wrecks which occur yearly; partly on account of the unskilfulness of both Russian and Tartar seamen, and partly owing to the clumsy build of the sailing vessels. Their architecture has undergone no change since the days of Ivan the Terrible, and since our own countryman, Jenkinson, visited Central Asia. The science of navigation is as little known as in the days of the old Greeks. Even the vessels of the Russian navy are often lost, owing to the incompetence or negligence of their commanders, and one very fine steamer was wrecked, and no soul saved, not many years ago, on the rocky cape of Apsheron, with all its officers and men, and the members of the Caspian Survey. One would have thought that, with so many scientific officers on board, ordinary precautions would have been taken; but such was not the case.

Everybody has by this time heard of Bakou and its wells of naphtha, and of its Hindoo hermits, who, after a perilous journey through the wilds of Central Asia, settled down in the neighbourhood of the Holy Fire. Why they should deem it holy I cannot understand, for it is without the sacred bounds of Hindustan, beyond which no good son of Brahma may go, and these pilgrims must undergo many tribulations and eat much dirt from the hands of the savage Mohammedan tribes, whilst *en route* to their destination.

I had a long conversation with the only two representatives of Hindooism then present in the temple, and, I flatter myself, rather astonished these ascetics by my knowledge of their language. They were Hindoos of low caste from Scinde, and when they informed me that they were "Padres," were dumbfounded by finding that a stay of nine years in the Indian peninsula, had made me thoroughly acquainted with every species of Joge, Sunyassee and Juthadharee, three out of the innumerable classes of religious mendicants which infest and are to be found in the whole length and breadth of that land of superstition, where *faineants* and idlers make religion a trade, and indulge in that slothful *far niente* so dear to the "mild Hindoo."

Their temple is a mere den, and unworthy of description; but the amount of petroleum produced in the Bakou district is very remarkable, and forms no inconsiderable portion of Russian commerce at the present day.

Alexander Dumas *père*, a short time previous to my visit to Badkobuh (as the Persians call Bakou), or "Windy Point," honoured the place with his presence, and received marked attention from Captain F—, the post captain.

Madame F— and her two very pretty little girls joined us at Bakou, her husband having been transferred to the Astrakhan station, because Dumas had brought him prominently forward in his work entitled "Le Cau-case," and thereby damaged him in the eyes of the chief officials, who always expect their subordinates to maintain a strict reticence concerning politics etc., in the presence of a "chief" like Dumas, "taking notes." The educated and free nobles, however, are much less reserved than those who receive Government pay, and I never found them hesitate to supply general information to a stranger.

Dumas, it appears, had an idea that it was incumbent on him to appear in full Circassian costume, *chamarré de décoration*, and armed with shashka (the terrible knife which the Circassians have used with such terrible ex-

cution in the numerous conflicts with the Russians in the Caucasus) and pistols of the largest ; and I am sorry to say that the effect he produced on the natives, in this attempt to do at Rome as they do at Rome, was described to me by a Russian lady in the following terms :—“*Lorsque j'ai vu Alexandre Dumas, il m'a fait tout à fait l'effet d'un Polichinelle* ;” which, in homely English, might be written, “He looked a regular Guy.”

As the Caspian has no natural harbours, and as vessels of large tonnage are compelled to anchor at the mouths of the Volga, by the banks of sand continually deposited by that mighty stream, Bakou is, *de facto*, the chief station of the Russian military navy in the Caspian ; it has a powerful citadel and extensive magazines, and from it the Czar can at any time hurl his troops of the Caucasus against putrefying Persia, without risking a hazardous campaign through the mountains of Azerbaijan, as Paskiewitch did when he marched on Tabriz, in 1827. The Caspian provinces of Persia are thus virtually Russian property, and they and Azerbaijan are the only parts of Persia, in my opinion, worth having ; for 8000 Russian troops could at any time occupy them and, what is more, keep them.

The Russian troops in the Caucasus are, owing to their perpetual encounters with the mountaineers, and their prolonged military service, hardened to war, and the effeminate Persians would stand no more chance against them than their ancestors did when old Parmenio marched through the Caspian gates in the times of Darius, or Darab, as Firdousi calls him.

Once away from Bakou, the Caspian put its back up, and favoured us with a short sharp sea, which reminded me strongly of the waves of our own dear British Channel. Gradually the guests at the table disappeared, victims of the *mal de mer* ; but as the sea was too heavy to admit of the passengers reposing on deck, the saloon soon became covered with ladies, gentlemen, and children, stretched on mattresses, and agonizing in sickness. The waiters were prostrated amongst the first ; and although they did make spasmodic efforts to do their duty, were signally unsuccessful in their attempts. The representatives of Great Britain, however, maintained our national reputation, and I and old Harms acted literally as *wet nurses* to all the ladies on board, at the same time swallowing our dinners and breakfasts with as much comfort as the pitching and rolling of the vessel would allow.

The storm increased in strength, and we shipped several seas when off Derbend, where we ought to have touched, but could not, owing to the storm. The captain lost his head entirely, and had it not been for the presence of mind of Harms, which manifested itself in giving orders for the better direction of the vessel, we might have made a very near and anything but pleasant acquaintance with the rocky shores of the Daghestan, or with the bottom of the Caspian.

We were enveloped in a thick mist, and a fierce wind swept down from the mountains, as if the genius of the Shah Dagh, or King's Mountain, that granite giant of the Caucasus, was seeking to overwhelm our Muscovite vessel, and avenge the captive Schamyl ; and it was not until the low flat sand-banks which form the delta of the Volga became visible, on the seventh day after our departure from Enzelli, that faces grew brighter, and Russian sailors left off calling on their saints.

We anchored at a distance of some eighty miles from Astrakhan, waiting for the river steamer which was to convey us to that city, and after passing one more night on board the “Prince Bariatinsky,” I shook hands with Harms, and proceeded towards Astrakhan.

Varieties.

LANDSEER'S “NAUGHTY BOY.”—The following anecdote is told of the origin of this painting. The boy had been brought to Sir Edwin Landseer, that his portrait might be painted, but became unruly and sulked ; for which his mother made him stand in the corner. His sulky and defiant look caught the artist's fancy, and he at once transferred the expression to the canvas, merely altering his dress, and introducing the accessories of the naughty schoolboy. The original painting is in the Sheepshanks Collection. In the picture, on p. 568, the name of Thomas Landseer, the engraver, was by error printed for Sir Edwin Landseer.

THE LATE MR. SHEEPSHANKS.—The owner of the famous collection of pictures known as the Sheepshanks Gallery, which he presented to the nation in his lifetime, was the son of a wealthy cloth manufacturer at Leeds, and succeeded his father in the business. His brother, the Rev. Richard Sheepshanks, F.R.S., formerly Fellow of Trinity College, Cambridge, was distinguished as a man of science. Mr. John Sheepshanks for a long time was known as a collector of choice pictures, which enriched his private gallery at Rutland Gate, Hyde Park. In December, 1856, he made known his munificent donation, and the pictures were removed to South Kensington, early in 1857. Mr. Sheepshanks disapproved management by Boards like the trustees of the British Museum and National Gallery, and made it a condition that the responsibility of taking care of his collection should rest with an individual Minister, the Vice-President of the Committee of Council on Education. The collection is especially rich in the best works of Mulready, Leslie, and Landseer, and contains fine examples of the principal modern British oil-painters. There are 233 oil-paintings, 103 sketches and drawings by Turner, Stanfield, Chalon, and others. Mr. Sheepshanks was born in 1781, and died on the 5th of October, of this year.

THE SWISS GUARD.—The Swiss Guards form the body-guard of the Sovereign Pontiff, and never leave Rome. Their barracks are at the Vatican and the Quirinal, and they mount guard at those palaces. Including officers, chaplain, non-commissioned officers and privates, they number about 150, of whom 130 are rank and file, and armed with a halberd and short sword. They receive higher pay than the army, and when not on guard are allowed to work on their own account. They wear the picturesque uniform which is said to have been designed by Michael Angelo ; and in the armoury at Basle I was shown two uniforms of the Swiss Papal Guard which were worn before those of the present pattern were introduced.—EDMUND WATERTON, *Walton Hall*. (In the *Athenaeum*).

VELVET.—Velvet is a fabric of Chinese origin ; the manuscript of Theodulf, which dates in the eighth century, and consequently at a time when the fabrics of Byzantium and Italy were not in existence, includes amongst its coloured illustrations a pattern of figured velvet, of which the Chinese origin is evident. In the middle ages, in London, Paris, and Venice, velvet was the compulsory wear of all who wore a crown or girded on a sword. Enriched with golden embroidery, it became the mantle of kings ; plain, it took the place of fur, and was used to line the hats or caps of citizens of quality. In 1530, the use of it had spread so greatly amongst the nobility, that Henry VIII was obliged to issue a sumptuary edict to compel the use of cloth garments. The manufacture of velvet, first introduced into Byzantium by Persian workmen, soon spread into the principal towns of Italy. In 1700, the velvet of Lyons, brought by that time to great perfection, competed successfully with that of Genoa, but its use was only general amongst the nobles of the kingdom. The ladies of quality wore, by preference, brocades, Pekin silks, damasks, satinettes, and striped and shaded silks ; and this during all the eighteenth century. The velvets manufactured in the middle of the last century are a proof of the astounding progress that had been made in this manufacture ; cut and uncut mingled together, shaded by five or six different threads, representing flowers of extreme finish and delicacy, waved amongst armorial designs of singular variety ; all the velvets of that age are *chefs-d'œuvre*, not surpassed in our own. During the first years of this century, even up to 1820, plain velvets were but little worn amongst women. In France and other countries it was generally a thing above their means, and even above their wishes. The time is not long passed when a velvet dress in a trousseau was looked upon as a sign of a great fortune. Now, velvet, without passing the limits of a rich and elegant article of attire, begins to be more generally worn.—*The Draper*.